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From the #1 bestselling author in Hard Boiled Mysteries and Police Procedurals comes a new blockbuster, 9th Circle.

Overview:

A madman terrorizes Seattle, attempting to recreate the nine circles of hell by using the blood and bodies of the innocent.

Detective Robi Darcmel, a gifted yet troubled savant, is the only man standing in the path of this pathological killer.

As the fate of the Emerald City hangs in the balance, can Darcmel overcome his failings or will Seattle burn to ash?

9th Circle Details

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Author : Carolyn McCray , Ben Hopkin

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From Reader Review 9th Circle for online ebook

Dennis says

Here's a dark, twisting, Seattle-based horror novel, for which Amazon's new Serial format (you pay one modest price, and the book is released in installments, apparently as the author finishes them) actually works reasonably well - lots of cliffhangers serve to build up suspense nicely. I'd recommend that the installments come perhaps a bit more frequently than every 2 weeks though.. The premise itself, especially in light of recent tragic news events, is a tremendously good hook (and given the horror elements, my use of "hook" is not entirely metaphorical): a gifted police detective, Robi Darcmel, is also severely autistic - and perhaps that is the root of his Agatha-Christie-like brilliance, as he combines facts into logically airtight conclusions, unencumbered by the distracting passions and emotions of other detectives without diagnosable behavioral disorders. But autism and the complete absence of EQ, with its attendant bizarre behavior, also threatens to cripple Robi's law enforcement career, which is why the police bureaucracy assigns him a 24/7 "minder" in the guise of a partner. The hapless, likable, police ne'er-do-well Trey Keane has secrets of his own, but by running interference, he serves to make Darcmel's life a lot easier, and his musings form most of the third-party-narrated story line. When a sadistic killer starts turning Seattle landmarks like the Underground and an old cemetery into Little-Houses-of-Horrors, following medieval descriptions of the different levels or 'circles of hell' found in Dante and Aristotle, and then turns his murderous attention to a little girl, Trey and his emotionally challenged partner Robi find themselves pushed to the very edge of their skills and their stomach. Surprise twists, cliffhangers, innocents in peril, and not least a great set of atmospheric Pacific-Northwest urban cityscape settings, complete with coffeehouses and endlessly drizzling rain, a spooky slaughterhouse, an experimental aircraft wind tunnel, to an Underground cathedral church, make this little serial novel easily and enjoyably readable.

Lee Dunning says

I like stories about serial killers, and I like quirky cops, so in theory '9th Circle' is right up my alley. And it is, to a point. The story is mostly told from the PoV of Detective Trey Keane, a screw up who might be more suited to selling used cars than detective work. However, he's been put in charge of keeping Seattle's star detective Robi Darcmel under control. No one else wants the job as Detective Darcmel has Asperger's Syndrome. Darc (as he is referred to through most of the book) is brilliant at deciphering clues, but is terrible at interfacing with his fellow human beings.

Much of the story is about Trey trying to keep Darc from getting into trouble, and frankly he's about as effective as an umbrella in a hurricane. There's also a handful of other characters, namely a doctor Mala Charan, and a young girl known only as Janey (nicer than Jane Doe). The little girl sees Darc as her hero (rightfully so). She's traumatized by the incident she survived and won't speak, but she is able to communicate with Darc through drawings. She's instrumental to Darc solving the case, and for the most part his need to utilize her is what causes much of the conflict in the story.

Oh, and of course, there's the serial killer. The authors try hard to hide who he is, but this proved one of their failings for me. Perhaps they tried too hard since the truth was so obvious to me. Second, the serial killer actually is more of a mass murderer. I lost count, but I'm pretty sure that close to 30 cops die in the story. It leaps over the line of terrible to ridiculous. With that sort of mayhem the feds would have converged on Seattle in a heartbeat. Other items which left me scratching my head was the killer's ability to lay hands on

massive amounts of explosives, Greek fire, poisonous snakes, huge quantities of liquid nitrogen, and ... more.

With those items the story is more horror fantasy than a true detective story. The killer became more super villain than real life threat. There are vast amounts of gore which a lot of readers found nightmarish. I didn't really notice those parts as they were almost always aftermath findings. I think there are more effective ways to convey a terrifying experience. In the case of the '9th Circle' I didn't once feel creeped out. It's not that I consider myself overly brave, it's just I don't react much to authors throwing a bunch of blood around in an attempt to shock. Show me the sharp knives and my imagination will take over. I'll run around turning on all the lights. Show me a severed limb and I'll shrug (in stories - please, no one show me a real severed limb).

While silly, the story is entertaining. Darc and Janey worked well. Mala is okay, and even proves useful once (mostly she struggles against Darc to keep Janey out of danger), and Trey has his moments. I would probably like him better if he were toned down a notch or two. As it is he's just a bit too over the top to be believable, and his use of 'dude' made me roll my eyes. I don't know if I'll read any of the stories that continue the series. I'll definitely read other people's reviews first and see if the authors learned anything from writing the first book and made changes.

Christopher says

My first full (complete) Kindle Serial was a very mixed bag. It's basically a thriller about an autistic detective and his wise-cracking partner on the hunt for a serial killer inspired by Dante's 9 Circles of Hell. While the pacing isn't bad, the characterizations are just off.

(1) The protagonist, Darc, isn't so much an autistic savant as he is a robot. I get that he processes information differently, but the belief I must suspend to allow for such an emotionless automaton to be a homicide detective is just too much. I can handle a quirky OCD-like detective (Monk or Psyche), but Darc's character borders on the superhuman far too often. Also, it's entirely unbelievable that Darc would have an ex-wife that would figure into the story given the personality traits he exhibits. There's nothing remotely human about him. It'd be one thing if there was some traumatic event that exacerbated his condition, resulting in his divorce, but that's nowhere to be found.

(1a) Add to that the fact that the book NEVER attempts to show HOW he processes information to lead to the next clue. The book just says he sees 'symbols' and the symbols 'coalesce' into something meaningful and then Darc is off running to the next location. It saves the authors the effort of having to tie their puzzles together but it's terribly unsatisfying for the reader. It's like a police-procedural without the procedure. Darc might as well be solving these crimes by magic.

(2) Trey, Darc's babysitter/partner, is obnoxious. His character trait is something of a jokester but his wisecracks are completely inappropriate given the horribly gory scenarios he finds himself in and just aren't terribly funny. Add to that the annoying habit of saying 'freaking' instead of cursing makes his character just annoying in the extreme.

(3) The book is gory. Which would be ok if it were scary. But with each successive "circle" the detectives uncover, the GALLONS AND GALLONS of blood become just comical rather than disturbing. Just picturing these immense set-pieces with the rivers of blood and viscera makes the book more like a level in DOOM than a thriller.

(4) Serial killer logistics. I don't mind clever serial killers. They're interesting. But killers with apparently unlimited resources and time are annoying. You can get away with it in Se7en. Anywhere else it just feels arbitrary. So how EXACTLY would this heretofore unsuspecting guy manage to murder EIGHTY-SEVEN people and put them in all these increasingly horrific contraptions/scenarios? And do so just ONE STEP AHEAD of the detectives? As Austin Powers said of having sex with Fat Bastard "No literally, HOW could you do it? The sheer mechanics of it are mind-boggling."

Amelia James says

Lliikkkee iiiittt!!!!

Very good reading, from start to finish. Kept me turning page after page to the the very end. Can't wait to read what comes next

Clyde Hutto says

I read this as a Kindle serial, waiting impatiently every 2 weeks for a few more chapters. I really loved reading it this way, it was new and fresh. This book was suspenseful, sometimes unrealistic and very gory but I loved it all the same.

Debi says

A homicide detective with Aspergers Syndrome? Fascinating! Beware: the descriptive murder scenes are EXTREMELY descriptive.

Michelle says

You people should just read this book yourselves and write your own review on this novel yourself and I really enjoyed reading this book very much so. Shelley MA

So, I Read This Book Today says

I picked up "Devious" a prequel to 9th Circle as a freebie on my Nook. It was fascinating in many ways. It tells the story of how two detectives become partners, one of whom suffers from Asperger's Syndrome. The very idea of someone so highly functioning with this Syndrome working as a detective with the Seattle PD fascinated me. Therefore, I immediately picked up 9th Circle, and am very glad I did.

There are many, many layers to this story, some of which, according to various reviews, really turned some people off. It is understandable, but I would recommend that, if you are going to read a book about a serial killer, you should probably expect to have blood involved. Admittedly, there was a LOT of blood in this one.

If you are one of those people who think your roast or bacon grows, prewrapped in plastic on trees, this probably isn't the book for you. It does give an exceptional look into the horrors that go on inside a packing house. (I won't go there)

The overall development of the storyline is tight, and having Darc as a lead made the book hard for me to put down. I could see Darc as the perfect partner for me - as a cop, often it is most difficult to concentrate on all the lines of investigation with so many outside influences muddying the waters, from politics to the need to follow procedure even when it is not the most efficient method of doing so. Unlike one reviewer, I have no doubt that, given the choice as a Captain, I would snap Darc up in a minute. Someone who wasn't distracted by outside 'noise', who simply worked the case to its logical conclusion? Oh, yea, baby. As for the comments about the FBI by other reviewers, you should know that the FBI is only allowed in at the specific request of the Police Department, and if they aren't called, they don't normally come. In this particular situation, the string of killings were minor at the beginning (yes, I can say minor) and wouldn't normally catch the FBI's attention at that point. Once the story heated up, there was, literally, no time to play the political game that is so integral to the summoning of the FBI. It is, in a word, a pissing match of massive proportions!

The one thing that did bother me about the story was the Darc/Maggie storyline. I put it off until I finished the book, then went searching at the Mayo Clinic website and others, and apparently there are, indeed, Asperger's victims (I say "victim" as simply an accepted term, not that I think they are especially "victims" per. se.) who marry. It was hard for me to wrap my head around, to be honest - marrying someone who has a totally flat affect, who doesn't understand the concepts of joy, the difference between a smile and a frown, someone who doesn't understand why you would stop to help a baby bird back into its nest, but would keep walking, because the bird simply didn't matter to his way of thinking. Besides the fact that I find it hard to think that it would be appealing to marry someone who has no concept of a hug, much less any more 'personal' body contact. Why would someone marry, when they have no ability to love, to hug, to touch? Better, why would you marry someone who you knew would not be able to love you, to understand why you might cry if they hurt you, or even what hurt you in the first place? Self flagellation? I suppose it helped me to understand Trey's betrayal, but putting yourself into a situation where you were binding yourself to a person with, literally, no ability to feel, was hard for me to accept.

As for the complaints that the incidents in the book moved too swiftly, I would suggest to those who were having a problem to go back and read the last few chapters again. It all pulls together knowing what is found out in the last couple of chapters.

I went ahead and ordered my copy of the next edition on preorder. I am quite looking forward to reading the next one.

Four stars instead of five due to problems I found with time line/spelling and the hope that I will find the next one even more fascinating than this one.

No direct sex, lots of violence, and buckets and buckets of blood

Christie says

What did I just finish reading? This was the most disgusting book I've ever read. Swimming pools full of blood and dead bodies. Children drowned in their parents own blood inside a 55 gallon container. WTH!

Darc and Trey are on a hunt in Seattle for a serial killer. We find that the murders are depictions of Dante's version of hell. Lets just say this is wrong in so many ways.

A little girl, Janey, plays a huge role in this story. She is head strong in helping Darc figure out what's going on.

I thought I had figured out who the killer was. Then come to find out, his head is severed. When I get to the last 2 chapters, the murderer is revealed, I sat up in the bed and yelled, " what the f&@\$!" I didn't see this twist.

In all this is a disgusting, morbid, screwed up book! AND I LOVED IT! Can't wait to start 7th Sin! I hope it's more screwed up
Than this one!

Eirlys says

Hell on Earth

I find it difficult to describe this book. It is the most gory story that I have ever read, but such an enthralling description of evil and psychological horror that it was Impossible to put down. I felt that I was experiencing the horrors along with Darc and Trey. They seemed an odd couple at first, but they complimented each other perfectly

Carolyn has an amazing imagination and can play with your emotions like a virtuoso on a Stradivarius violin.

Adriane says

I did not like this book

It's not that I hated it either, so it will never make it to my "hated books" list, mainly because my most hated books illicit real emotions in me, helplessness, anger, "negative emotions" but at least something. Also my most hated books are of an indisputable quality, I just hate them because of the things I feel when reading them. So yeah, this book doesn't go there.

This book is not good for reasons I will outline below but it still gets 2 stars because it isn't a grammatical, spelling, or formatting nightmare. There was clearly effort put into that and the authors get credit for that.

+++++SPOILERS AHEAD++++++

Here is an outlined list of why I dislikes book

1. The main character is depicted as autistic, but his autism is presented as glowing lines and symbols everywhere I stead of cold logic or trying to with words reframe how someone with autism might see situations from a different lens. If it was that and explanation of visually thinking out logic, fine. But no, this dude literally sees lines glow and branch out from him. To a point that is supernatural, and annoyingly

unbelievable.

2. This genius detective does stuff that no precinct would allow any detectives to do. Contaminating evidence, tracking up crime scenes, refusing backup, and loads of other things that would let peeps get away in the real world. Then they paired him with the most inept detective in the unit, just because he can speak to people and translate his partners quirks, but ends up being a liability in many situations.

4. The stuff written from the small girls perspective weren't believable as things a small child would think, other than the personification of her bear.

3. This is the biggest one, literally these other issues are minor bumps that I could have overlooked if this last point didn't exist. The serial killing was outrageous, completely out there. It would have taken a team of at least 20 people to rig up all the traps and millions upon millions of dollars to pay for the elaborate materials. For one they would've had to spend like hundreds of thousand dollars on snakes alone, then gallons and gallons of liquid nitrogen is not cheap even remotely and there were entire vats used, next would be the historically accurate replicas of torture devices all collected in a single space, plus Greek fire which is also not cheap to make and hundreds of Taser guns and just the amount of people that two dudes killed it just doesn't make any sense and things like this have to make even a little bit of sense to be believable or scary or whatever they were going for here. So if you take two seconds out of reading to ponder the logistics lose any veneer that this could work on any level. No killer has unlimited resources or manpower in order to kill hundreds of people in a single city, except governments, point blank.

Also the killer used symbols to create puzzles but none of the symbols used were me optioned, there were no pictures of symbol patterns and the actualize of the symbols was never explained it was just assumed that Darc knows what they mean... which is lazy. If you're going to talk about esoteric symbols being used show how they are being used, put in little line drawings do something to show their importance that lets the audience get involved instead of just harping on how important they are.

Ok I'm done, TLDR: Unbelievable serial killings makes a tenuous premise ridiculous, skip this one.

Teresa Alonzo says

That was some pretty gory stuff! What a great story though. Really kept me wanting to know more and the characters were great. I really like the angle played by Darc and his ability to see things no one else can. Great read, highly recommend!

Julie Rein says

Don't start reading if you have to be up the next day!

Thrilling plot grabs you from the start and doesn't let you go! Creepy psycho killer and a savant detective trying to out maneuver each other. Great well developed characters, thrilling plot with wild twists and turns takes you on a fast paced ride right till the end ! Loved it

Leevora says

LOVED THIS STORY! ABSOLUTELY LOVED THE MAIN CHARACTER DARC and I'm so looking forward to reading the next installment.

CL says

I waited till I had all the episodes before I started to read it & I found it to be entertaining & refreshing that an autistic challenged adult had the role of main character. I also liked how his side kick partner was able to relate to him & work with him thru his episodes. All in all the story had a white knight all but emotionally challenged white knight quality to it.
